

Message Text

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ACTION CU-05

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USBERLIN

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ROME FOR PAO SHIRLEY

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL, GE
SUBJECT: AMERICAN FILM WEEK

REF: (A) BERLIN 942, (B) USIA 4814, (C) BERLIN 1382,
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1. P&C OFFICERS MET MARCH 2 AT MINCULT WITH FRAU NINDL AND
FILM DEPARTMENT'S DEPUTY CHIEF RAINER OTTO,WHO LED
DISCUSSION FOR GDR SIDE, AND AGREED WITH OPENING
REMARKS BY NINDL THAT PAO MEETING WITH BETTIN ON FEB 28
(REFTEL D) HAD PRODUCED POSITIVE RESULTS AND
BOTH SIDES COULD NOW PROCEED TO IRON OUT PROBLEMS
CONCERNING CONTROL AND CONTENT.

2. OTTO SAID WITH ELIMINATION OF BERLIN BECAUSE OF FILM
WEEK TITLE PROBLEMS, GDR NOW OFFERING EITHER TWO OR THREE
CITIES AS POSSIBLE SITES--DRESDEN,ERFURT AND HALLE--AND
WOULD AGREE TO WHATEVER SUITED US SIDE. PAO REPLIED THAT
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SITES NOT AS IMPORTANT AS CONTROL AND FILM TITLES, WHICH
SHOULD BE RESOLVED FIRST. LENGTHY AND DETAILED
NEGOTIATION, DURING WHICH GDR SIDE DISPLAYED WILLINGNESS
MEET US REQUIREMENTS,FINALLY PRODUCED FOLLOWING ARRANGEMENT

3. FILM WEEK WILL RUN CONCURRENTLY IN ALL THREE CITIES
MAY 18-25,WITH OFFICIAL OPENING ON 18TH IN DRESDEN,AT BEST

THEATRE WITH SEATING CAPACITY ELEVEN HUNDRED. PRINTS WILL BE UNDER EMBASSY OFFICER CONTROL AT ALL TIMES, OTTO AGREEING TO THESE CONDITIONS WITHOUT RESERVATION EVEN WHILE ADMITTING THEY WITHOUT PRECEDENT. PAO DECIDED TO INCREASE BY ONE CITY BUT REDUCE TOTAL NUMBER FILMS TO BE SHOWN WHEN OTTO AND NINDL AGREED THAT CONTENT BE DRAWN EXCLUSIVELY FROM LIST ORIGINAL TWELVE TITLES PROPOSED BY US SIDE.

4. WHEN IT WAS AGREED THAT CONTROL COULD BEST BE EXERCISED BY HAVING THE OPENING NIGHT IN DRESDEN, THEN HAVING A DIFFERENT FILM SHOWING IN ALL THREE CITIES THREE TIMES A DAY (1430, 1700, 2000), WITH AMERICAN CONTROL THROUGHOUT, SEVEN TITLES PROVED THE MOST CONVENIENT TO CONTROL IN THIS ARRANGEMENT.

5. WORKING OUT SPECIFIC TITLES FOUND GDR SIDE EQUALLY CONCILIATORY AND WAS ACCOMPLISHED SWIFTLY. THUS, FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL FOUR TITLES ("MODERN TIMES," "CITIZEN KANE," "2001-A SPACE ODYSSEY," AND "TRUE GRIT") AGREED TO AT THE FEBRUARY 6 MEETING (REFTEL A), THREE MORE WERE ADDED ("WEST SIDE STORY," "INHERIT THE WIND," AND "ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST"). OTTO REQUESTED THAT "WEST SIDE STORY" PRINT BE IN 70MM"FOR MAXIMUM EFFECT."

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6. INTRIGUED BY THE ADDITION OF THE LAST-NAMED, WHICH HAD EARLIER BEEN REJECTED "BECAUSE OF ITS DIRECTOR," PAO SAID IT WAS MOST WELCOME REVERSAL BUT WONDERED WHY, AND OTTO REPLIED THAT "CUCKOO" AND ITS DIRECTOR BOTH HAD TO BE CONSIDERED AMERICAN AND THEREFORE ACCEPTABLE (A VIEW CONTRADICTING THE POSITION OF HIS DIRECTOR, DR.KRANZ, WHO HAD LED THE FEBRUARY 6 MEETING). ASKED STATUS OF GDR PURCHASE OF "CUCKOO," OTTO SAID IT IN NEGOTIATION AT PRESENT, AND IF PURCHASED IN ANY CASE WOULD NOT BE SHOWN UNTIL JUNE, THEREFORE INCLUSION IN FILM WEEK HIGHLY APPROPRIATE.

7. VIEWING OTTO AS MORE REASONABLE THAN KRANZ, PAO SAID SELECTION VERY SATISFACTORY AND BALANCED, BUT ASKED IF HE COULD GIVE BETTER EXPLANATION THAN KRANZ OF OBJECTION TO "GONE WITH THE WIND" AS BEING "UNPROGRESSIVE." OTTO AVOIDED ANY CHARACTERIZATION OF GWTW, REPLYING THAT AT END OF WAR, "WHEN BERLIN WAS NOT DIVIDED," MANY EAST BERLINERS SAW GWTW AT A WEST BERLIN THEATRE WHICH RAN IT FOR VERY LONG AND "MOST PROFITABLY." PAO SAID HE DID NOT INTEND INSIST ON INCLUSION OF GWTW, BUT ONLY TO PROVIDE SOME FUTURE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE MANY EAST GERMANS

WHO WOULD CERTAINLY WISH SEE THIS FAMOUS HISTORICAL FILM. OTTO REPLIED THAT THE SUBJECT COULD BE RAISED AGAIN FOR A LATER FILM WEEK.

8. OTTO PROPOSED "MODERN TIMES" AS OPENING NIGHT FEATURE, TO WHICH PAO AGREED COMMENTING IT APPROPRIATE MEMORIAL TO UNIVERSALLY-LOVED CHARLES CHAPLIN. OTTO ASKED IF AMBASSADOR WOULD DELIVER SOME REMARKS AT DRESDEN OPENING, AND WHEN THIS WAS AGREED TO, SAID THE GDR COUNTERPART WOULD BE DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE PEHNARD, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FILMS.

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ROME FOR PAO SHIRLEY

9. ASKED ABOUT THE EARLIER REQUIREMENT THAT ALL PRINTS BE DELIVERED TO MINCULT SIX WEEKS IN ADVANCE, OTTO WAVED IT ASIDE AND SAID THAT SIX DAYS PRIOR TO THE OPENING WAS ALL THE TIME NEEDED TO CHECK "NOT THE CONTENT BUT THE QUALITY" OF THE PRINTS, AND "OF COURSE, UNDER EMBASSY CONTROL." HE WAS FIRM, HOWEVER, IN HIS REQUEST THAT ALL PHOTOGRAPHIC STILLS AND CREDITS, WITH A VERY BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE FILMS BE IN GDR HANDS BY MARCH 20 FOR THE PRINTING OF A BROCHURE. OTTO HANDED OVER THE BROCHURE PREPARED FOR THE DANISH FILM WEEK ("IN THE GDR" ON THE FRONT COVER) AS EXAMPLE, AND SAID THREE TEXTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS HAD TO BE MADE. (EMBASSY WILL COVER THIS ASPECT IN SEPTTEL.)

10. WITH THE ESSENTIAL BUSINESS HAVING BEEN DISCUSSED,

NINDL SAID SHE WISHED REMIND US SIDE OF NEED FOR
RECIPROCITY AND INFORMATION CONCERNING TIME AND PLACE FOR
GDR FILM WEEKS IN THREE CITIES OF US. OTTO COMMENTED
THAT WHILE HE AWARE OF DIFFICULTIES IN MAKING SUCH
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ARRANGEMENTS BY USG, WHICH WAS NOT THE CASE FOR GDR,
NEVERTHELESS INFORMATION WAS REQUIRED SINCE GDR WAS
HOPING FOR AUTUMN SHOWINGS. PAO MENTIONED HAVING
LEARNED THAT MOMA HAD AGREED SCREEN 20 GDR FILMS BY
WERNER HOCHBAUM IN AUGUST, BUT NINDL AND OTTO JOINED IN
EXPLAINING "THAT WILL BE PRIVATE PROGRAM ARRANGED BY OUR
FILM ARCHIVE AND THE MUSEUM,JUST LIKE THE
GRIFFITH PROGRAM HERE LAST YEAR, AND DOES NOT HAVE
OFFICIAL CHARACTER." FINAL POINT CONCERNED OFFICIAL
US FILM DELEGATION AND OTTO SAID THIS WELCOME SINCE IT
CUSTOMARY, AND HOPED THAT PROMINENT DIRECTOR OR
STARS COULD VISIT GDR. THE MEETING ENDING WITH AGREEMENT
TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY INFORMATION AS SOON AS DECISIONS
WERE MADE, AND WITH EXPRESSIONS OF SATISFACTION FROM BOTH
SIDES THAT THE FILM PROJECT HAD AFTER ALL BEEN SALVAGED.

11. COMMENT: DESPITE GDR FLEXIBILITY IN COMING TO
TERMS, UNTIL MPAA GIVES US CONCRETE POSITIVE WORD, WE CAN
ONLY KEEP OUR FINGERS CROSSED THAT OUR FILM WEEK WILL
INDEED TAKE PLACE. FAILURE BY MPAA TO COMPLY WITH
AGREEMENT MADE LAST YEAR BY GRONICH IN PARIS TO DELIVER
GERMAN-SYNCHRONIZED VERSIONS WILL BE INTERPRETED BY GDR
AS POLITICAL DECISION. EMBASSY URGES USIA MAKE SOME EFFORT
FACILITATE AGREEMENT BY MARK SPIEGEL IN ROME, WITH WHOM
PAO WILL ATTEMPT ESTABLISH CONTACT. BOLEN

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